

DMH Connections

A publication of the Mass. Department of Mental Health
Employee Newsletter
Office of Communications & Consumer Affairs

March 2009



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Commissioner Leadholm Launches Governor Patrick's Western Mass Forum Series

Commissioner Barbara Leadholm was in Springfield last month, the first of Governor Patrick's leaders to launch regular office hours in Western Massachusetts. The Governor's Western Mass. office will hold public office hours at locations throughout Berkshire, Franklin, Hampden and Hampshire counties.



This initiative offers citizens another tool to interact with their elected officials and government leaders where they live, while gaining a deeper understanding of Governor Patrick's key initiatives and the role of state agencies. Agency commissioners and other officials will host office hours and open forums once a week through April.

In the first of these forums, Commissioner Leadholm spoke to an audience of 70 people at Western New England College where she discussed the Department's fiscal year 2010 budget, the difficult economic realities we all face and how DMH is moving forward with a transformed system.

Commissioner Leadholm explained that the Department's vision through the Community Based Flexible Supports initiative will shift DMH to an agency that sets standards, provides oversight, monitors and assures that the high level of quality service DMH provides is based in recovery, resiliency and consumer choice. In relation to budget realities, a transformed DMH includes accelerated plans for redesigned inpatient system; consolidation of forensic services; a reduction of

Seclusion/Restraint Initiative

Commissioner's message



Click here to view
the [Commissioner's message](#)

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Please contribute to the next edition of DMH Connections

Deadlines for upcoming
issues:

March 20th for the April 6th
newsletter

April 21st for the May 4th
newsletter

Please send all materials to
Sarah Spaeth at
[sarah.r.spaeth@massmail.state
.ma.us](mailto:sarah.r.spaeth@massmail.state.ma.us)

Employee Profile: Bob Smith "The Benefits Guy"

inpatient bed capacity; and transition of inpatients ready for discharge to the community in line with Community First/Olmstead Plan. Expanded community capacity and the new DMH hospital, scheduled for completion in 2012, is key to the Department's future, Commissioner Leadholm said.

Members of the Western Mass. legislative delegation joined Commissioner Leadholm at the forum including Sen. Gale D. Candaras, D-Wilbraham; and Rep. John W. Scibak, D-South Hadley.

DMH Citizens' Breakfast Tradition Continues

The DMH Metro Suburban Area and the North East Area each held their annual citizens' breakfast events at the State House, connecting members of the mental health community with their legislators. It is an opportunity for consumers and family members to share good news and success stories about their life experiences with mental illness.



Commissioner Leadholm was on hand to welcome the audience and present certificates to the legislative sponsors. "These are times that require bold and creative thinking and courage to make hard decisions and always with the intent of best serving the people who rely on us," said Commissioner Leadholm, "DMH must transform itself; accomplish its mission differently, to become that bridge between the uncertainty of today and the hope for the future."

More than 300 people including legislators, consumers, family members and advocates and providers attended the breakfast events, each sponsored by two legislators who were honored for their leadership and support for DMH and its mission.



Senator Karen Spilka (pictured left with Commissioner Leadholm) and Representative Tom Sannicandro sponsored the Metro Suburban Area breakfast and were honored for their legislative efforts and leadership. Sen. Spilka is Chairwoman of the Committee on Children, Families

Who is the person behind "The Benefits Guy" icon on the DMH Intranet? It's Bob Smith, the statewide benefits specialist for DMH. He plays a critical role: Bob educates consumers as well as case managers, area directors and other stakeholders about benefits, such as MassHealth, social security and food stamps, to name a few. Bob informs consumers what their benefits mean and what happens to their benefits if something changes, like starting a new job. Bob's services help consumers make an informed choice since benefits play such an important role in many consumers' lives.

Bob began his DMH career 23 years ago as a mental health worker at Danvers State Hospital. He wasn't looking to get into the mental health care field, he said, but "fell into it" after he sold a plumbing business. "I have found great fulfillment working for DMH, finding great job satisfaction in helping people with their benefits," he said.

When Bob isn't travelling the state to give lectures about benefits you can probably find him fishing. Bob loves bass fishing and travels all over New England to pursue his favorite pastime, although it can be a little risky. Just last summer, Bob and his wife, Pamela, were fishing when their boat hit a rock and Bob fell overboard. Meanwhile, the boat was circling him and nearly hit him several times. Luckily his wife was able to control the boat and Bob got back on board safely - although a little wet!

Bob also collects Zippo lighters. He has roughly 30 Zippos in his collection, his favorite being a remembrance of the Titanic. For his collection, he looks for Zippo lighters that depict advertising.

Bob and Pamela have two

and Persons with Disabilities. Senator Spilka has been a leader in the reform of the CHINS (Children in Need of Services) process. She established a process and brought stakeholders together on this important issue and made it a priority. She was also instrumental in the passage of the law Protecting Children in the Care of the Commonwealth (Chapter 176 of the Acts of 2008).

Rep. Sannicandro (*pictured right*) is a member of the Committees on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities, Housing and Steering, Policy & Scheduling. Representative Sannicandro has been an outspoken leader in advocating for persons with disabilities and a great supporter of people and families with mental illness.



At the North East Area breakfast Senator Susan Tucker and Representative Steven Walsh were presented certificates. Senator Susan Tucker is chairwoman of the Committee on Housing was an active supporter on the Housing Bond Bill that passed last year that included language on the Facility Consolidation Fund for developing an expanded the future pool of housing.



Also in attendance was Representative Steven Walsh (*pictured left with Commissioner Leadholm*), chairman of the Committee on Community Development & Small Businesses. He is a good friend of the DMH Lynn Site Office and active in mental health issues in the city of Lynn.

The spotlight of the breakfast events was the personal stories shared by DMH clients. Several consumers spoke at each breakfast, and each did an amazing job of explaining the hope and heartache that comes with living with mental illness. Their stories put a face on mental illness and demonstrated that treatment works.

Animal Shelter Drive Underway at Worcester State Hospital

It started with a simple statement: "I think it is important that we give back to the community." And soon an idea turned into action to help a local animal shelter. Worcester State Hospital clients developed a patient-driven task force to brainstorm ideas about ways they can help forgotten animals. They are now asking the DMH community to assist them by donating to the Worcester Animal Rescue League.

children. His son Robert is an attorney for DMR, and their daughter, Meghan, is currently in school pursuing her Ph.D. in chemical engineering at Case Western Reserve University.

Bob is happy to assist anyone who has questions about benefits, just give him a call or drop him an email at: (978) 863-5071

robert.smith@dmh.state.ma.us

State Launches TV Network - "MassTV"

Governor Deval Patrick recently launched an independent online video network called MassTV that will allow hundreds of community access television stations to share and access state video content.

The Governor's Office and MassAccess, the Massachusetts Chapter of the Alliance for Community Media, worked together to develop the network, which allows local television access centers to broadcast videos produced by Massachusetts state agencies, non-profit organizations and federal and state legislators through an innovative video sharing site.

"This is another way for communities, and most importantly, citizens to get involved in their state government," said Governor Patrick. "We will use this free network to help spread information about what we are doing on Beacon Hill and how it affects residents from around Massachusetts."

Along with providing broadcast-ready videos to local access centers, MassTV offers a streaming size video for citizens on their [website](#) free of charge. More than 100,000 subscribers of local access television stations are already receiving

During March two boxes will be located in the Worcester State Hospital lobby for donations. The boxes were created and decorated by clients as well as the flyers found throughout the hospital. The shelter is in need of the following items:

dry/canned cat and dog food, clay kitty litter, new or gently used blankets and towels, cat and dog toys and KMR puppy and kitten formula. A cash donation box is also available in the Canteen.



Please help Worcester State Hospital clients reach their goal of giving back to the community. Your support is greatly appreciated!

Clinicians Corner: An Introduction to the New Children's Mental Health law

In November 2006, the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and Children's Hospital co-authored a paper examining children's mental health system in the Commonwealth. The ideas within were carried by The Children's Mental Health Campaign and served as a springboard for new legislation. The bill, sponsored by Representative Ruth Balser and Senator Steven Tolman, was passed in August of 2008 and is now known as Chapter 321. The full law is available by [clicking here](#).



Chapter 321 has four central themes that address some of the crucial issues for children with serious emotional disturbances.

The first is early identification of children with mental health needs in familiar settings-- for example, in their pediatrician's office, in their daycare or preschools and in public school settings. The law specifies that pediatricians will be reimbursed for providing behavioral health screenings and that the Department of Early Education and Care will provide behavioral health consultations to young children. Chapter 321 also created a task force on behavioral health in public schools that will make recommendations on how to best deliver services in school and will pilot an assessment tool in at least 10 districts. Additionally, MassHealth, DMH, and DEEC will work together to develop a proposal for the provision of mental health consultations to schools.

programming from the MassAccess test Web site. There are an estimated two million subscribers to local cable access channels across the state.

Human Resources Website Recognizes Performance Recognition Program

The Performance Recognition Program provides us with a chance to celebrate the accomplishments of your peers and co-workers in the Department of Mental Health showcased through their commitment, dedication and contributions which exemplify excellence in public service. Please take a moment to look at Human Resources Division's new website that acknowledges the 2008 winners from the Executive and Higher Education branches of state government. To visit the 2008 Performance Recognition Program website, [click here](#).

While you look at the list of employees who were acknowledged last year, think about those who are working around you. They, too, may deserve, through their unwavering commitment to the department, their strong leadership skills and their innovative and creative ways of conducting business, to be recognized in the 2009 Performance Recognition Program. More information on the 2009 Performance Recognition Program will be distributed to all employees within the next few weeks.

During these challenging times leaders will rise to the opportunities that change brings.

The second area of focus is level of care. This section of the legislation addresses youth that get "stuck" in acute psychiatric care because there are no available community-based and/or residential beds. While DMH, the Executive Office of Health and Human Services and the Department of Children and Families are already much involved in managing this population, children and adolescents still get stuck in hospitals, and Chapter 321 will aid in implementing new policies to continue to concentrate on this critical issue.

The third section of Chapter 321 highlights insurance coverage enhancement. Central to this portion is the extension of authority granted to the Division of Insurance (DOI). DOI now has the mandate to regulate behavioral health manager companies as well as hold parent HMO companies responsible for those that don't comply with the law. The law also ensures that if a service can not be provided within network, the HMO will reimburse the family for out-of-network costs.

The legislation also enhances certain components of the Children's Behavioral Health system. DMH is designated as the leading voice for children's mental health, as well as the agency to take the lead in the new Children's Behavioral Health Research Center. The law also creates a Children's Behavioral Health Advisory Council, which is convened by Commissioner Leadholm.

More information is available on the Children's Mental Health Campaign at their website:
www.childrensmentalhealthcampaign.org

SERV as an Inspiration!

The SERV website has many exciting volunteer opportunities for the spring. The SERV volunteer calendar is updated every few days, so visit often for new volunteer opportunities. Below are some exciting and fun one-time SERV shifts scheduled for March and April:

- March 12 - New Bedford American Red Cross Food Pantry; sort and distribute food
- Week of March 9 or March 23 - (any day but Thursday) Kingston Plymouth Area Coalition for the Homeless; sort donated clothes and household items
- Saturday, March 28 - Lawrence Horizons for Homeless Children; training for volunteer Playspace Activity Leaders
- April 14 Annual Read Aloud Day for Westfield Public Schools
- Any Monday, Tuesday, or Thursday - Northampton Survival Center needs food pantry volunteers

This month, Jessica Hall, a case manager from the North County Case Management Site Office in Fitchburg, shares her experience volunteering through SERV:

I began volunteering with American Red Cross on September 11, 2008, during the annual "Day of

DMH Staff Development Announces New Microsoft Training Classes

More than 60 new course offerings for Microsoft Office training (Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint, Outlook) have been planned for January to June 2009.

You can search the PACE Course Catalog for specific offerings or you can download a list of all the offerings from the [PACE Library](#) > Resources (keyword search 'computer'). Look for DMH MS Office Offerings Jan-Jun 2009.

Multicultural Corner: Erin Go Bragh!



As we approach St. Patrick's Day, The Office of Multicultural Affairs offers a look at Irish Americans in Massachusetts.

Massachusetts is, as we all know well, the most Irish state in the nation in terms of percentage of population. According to the 2007 American Community Survey, 24 percent of the Massachusetts population declares themselves to be of Irish heritage. Nationally, 12 percent of the country claims Irish ancestry, making it the 2nd largest ethnic group following behind German. Six of the top 10 most Irish cities and towns in the country are in Massachusetts, according to the 2000 Census, and number one is Milton where 38 percent of



Remembrance." Since that blood drive I have volunteered at three other blood drives in my local area. I typically work in the canteen or registering individuals as they arrive to donate blood. I have found the process volunteering through SERV with the American Red Cross very easy to manage and schedule. I am able to choose local blood drives that accommodate my schedule and the shifts are booked directly with the Red Cross Volunteer Coordinator in my area.

I find volunteering for the American Red Cross very rewarding as it serves a vital health need. The Red Cross cites a statistic that someone in the U.S. needs blood every 2 seconds. However, only 5 percent of the eligible population donates blood in any given year - that translates to 3 people out of 100. Healthy donors are the only source of blood. I know that by volunteering with the Red Cross I am helping to support their mission to maintain an adequate blood supply in the U.S.

I also donate blood regularly as part of the Massachusetts State Employees Blood Bank. I find blood donation to be very rewarding as well and enjoy the following quote given by the Red Cross, "You will be someone's hero - you may give a newborn, a child, a mother or a father, a brother or a sister another chance at life. In fact, you may help save up to three lives with just one donation." I encourage my fellow state employees to consider volunteering with the SERV Program and to consider giving blood!

Thank you, Jessica! And thanks to all DMH employees who generously give their time and energy to our fellow citizens in need.

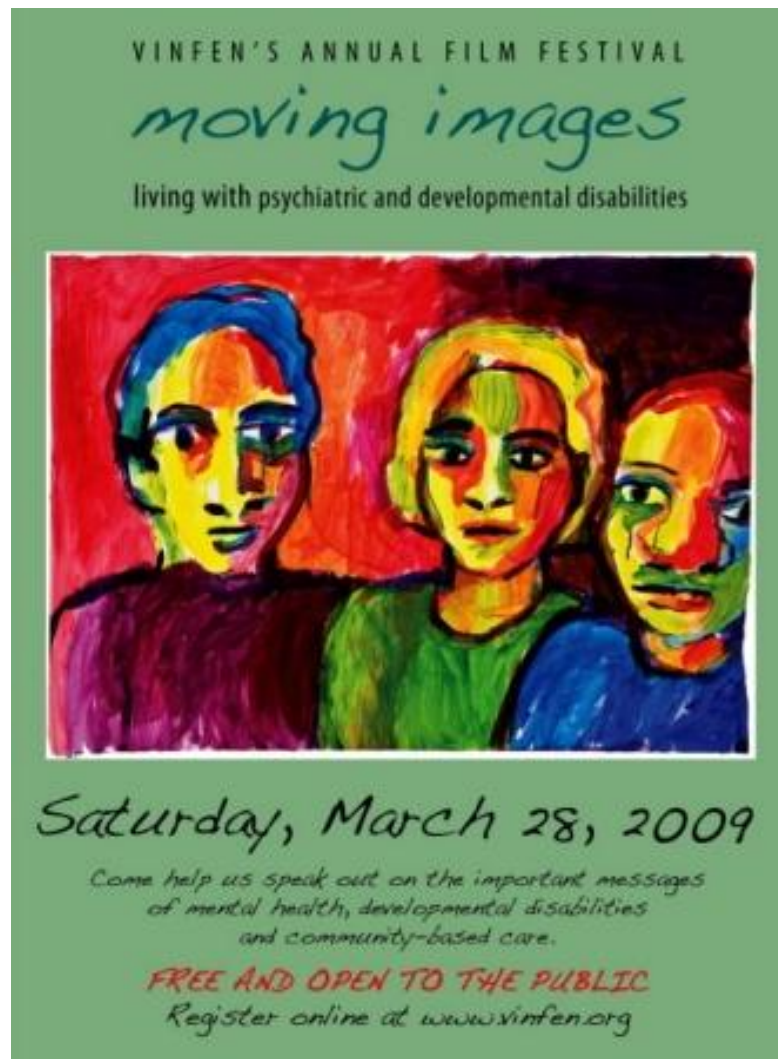
Please visit the [SERV website](#) to find a volunteer opportunity.

the residents claimed Irish ancestry.

According to the 2000 Census, there are more than 25,000 speakers of Irish Gaelic in the United States, with the largest percentages in New York (18.6 percent) and Massachusetts (12.76 percent).

Historically Irish immigrants faced many of the same challenges as today's immigrants. It is not by accident that the Irish Immigration Center in Boston serves not only newcomers from the Old Sod, but also immigrants from other countries around the world. Like many of today's refugees and immigrants, large numbers of Irish came to America as a result of natural disaster, in this case the "Great Famine." Many, as a result of poverty, ill health and poor conditions, did not survive the journey. Upon arrival, many stayed in port cities where there were other fellow Irish who could help with getting settled into life in America while others continued on to other large cities or mill or railroad towns in search of work. Many lived in squalid conditions despite the promise of the great American dream that lured so many to make their home in the United States. And like many of today's immigrants, many Irish faced prejudice and discrimination most famously remembered by the controversial "No Irish Need Apply" signs.

The Irish Immigration Center offers legal advice, information, advocacy, referrals and support for immigrants on issues relating to immigration, employment, citizenship, housing and social services. Founded in 1989 to meet the needs of the Irish immigrant population in Massachusetts, today the center continues to serve Irish newcomers and has expanded to assist immigrants



Tewksbury Hospital on the Move with Recovery and Wellness

On February 6, the Tewksbury Rehabilitation Department staff and program participants were pleased to host an open house to celebrate the grand opening of a new exercise area, the "Pump It Up" gym.



Anthony Castiglione (pictured above), North East Area Operations Manager, officiated at the ribbon cutting ceremony and then tried out the elliptical machine. This new gym will give clients and staff access to state-of-the-art weight training and cardiovascular equipment as part of our "healthy changes initiative." Rehabilitation Staff received training from a personal training consultant in the safe use of exercise equipment and in how to assist equipment users in developing a

from more than 100 nations every year. You can learn more about the Irish Immigration Center from their [website](#) where you will see the following words on the homepage:

NI NEART GO CUR LE CHEILE -
TOGETHERNESS IS STRENGTH

The 2nd Annual Day of Irish Culture
March 18 at 11:00 am
Massachusetts State House
This event is presented by the Irish Culture Centre of New England and will feature exhibits from local Irish organizations and businesses located throughout Nurses Hall and the Grand Staircase, as well as musical performances, film, art, dance and more.

Local St. Patrick's Day Parade Schedules:
Abington, March 22, 2009, 1 p.m.
Boston, March 15, 2009, 1 p.m.
Cape Cod, March 7, 2009, 11 a.m.
Holyoke, March 22, 2009, 11:50 a.m.
Lawrence, March 8, 2009, 1 p.m.
Scituate, March 15, 2009, 1 p.m.
Worcester, March 8, 2009, noon

Conferences and Events

February - April **[Suicide Prevention Training](#)** register online

Wednesday mornings, Feb 4 to March 18 **Mind/Body Stress Management Program for Parents of Behaviorally Challenging Children**
Massachusetts General Hospital, For more information call Marilyn Wilcher (617-643-6035) or Laura Malloy, LICSW (617-643-6061); or email moodandanxiety@partners.org

personalized training program.

The open house was a great success and was attended by many including NEA staff, consumers and family members. During the open house, tours were conducted to showcase some of the components of the Rehab Center: the Art Studio, the Computer Lab, the Music Room, the Resource Room and the Vocational Employment Areas including the Castle Caf  and Snack Cart, the Clerical and Resource Unit, Work Adjustment Training and the Woodshop where demonstrations showed the process of making Adirondack chairs. Visitors were so impressed with the chairs that we even received 10 orders by the end of the day!



An overview was provided of the Center's new and exciting groups and classes including Health and Wellness, Recovery and Peer Support just to name a few. The event was

truly a collaboration of the Rehabilitation Department, clients and staff. Together as a team, they served as greeters, tour guides and caterers. Music and artwork was provided by the multi-talented patients involved in Rehab services.

Comments heard as visitors left the open house included: "This is a great place; I'll have to come over more often." "I am amazed at the diversity of things that you offer." "I love the gym. How soon can I use it?" Several visitors noted the positive feeling and sense of hope throughout the Rehab Center.

Metro Boston/Central Office Annual NAMI Walk Planning Underway

May is Mental Health Month and the time for the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI) of Massachusetts annual Walk for the Mind of America, set for Sunday, May 31, 2009. And once again, DMH Metro Boston Area and Central Office will jointly field the "Recovery Is Real" team, this year with a goal of 300 walkers and \$10,000. If you are interested in walking or volunteering please contact your team captain.



March 12 [**Why People Die by Suicide**](#) 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Thomas Joiner, Ph.D. lectures;
Best Western Royal Plaza Hotel
181 Boston Post Rd W.,
Marlborough, MA; register
online

May 11 **Youth Mental Health:
Needs, Challenges and
Opportunities**
9 a.m. - 5 p.m. at the
Sherman Auditorium
Beth Israel Deaconess Medical
Center-East Campus, No Fee

June 22 - August 28 26th [**26th
Annual Cape Cod Summer
Symposia**](#)

This year's team captains are:
Lois Cazeau, Dr. Solomon Carter Fuller Mental Health
Center
Tina Licciardello, Cambridge-Somerville Site
Hector Merlin, Massachusetts Mental Health Center
Keith Partridge, Dr. Solomon Carter Fuller Mental Health
Center
Grace Royal, Metro Boston Mental Health Unit
Sarah Spaeth, Central Office

Interested staff and friends can learn more about the
walk at a kick-off luncheon Wednesday, March 18, from
11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Lombardo's Restaurant in
Randolph. The luncheon is free to anyone who wants to
create a NAMI Walk team or learn more.

Those not able to attend the 2009 NAMI Walk can still
make a donation to this worthy cause. See your team
captain about how you can participate in the Recovery is
Real Walk Team or make a donation.

Articles of Interest

[After Abuse, Changes in the
Brain](#) by Benedict Carey, New
York Times

[A Series of Suicides Unnerves
West Point](#) by Lisa W. Foderaro,
New York Times

[Suit Progresses on Housing for
Mentally Ill](#) by Julie Bosman,
New York Times

[Ruby Rogers; helped win key
rights for mentally ill](#) by Bryan
Marquard, Boston Globe

[Budget cuts mean tough times
for Department of Mental Health
clients](#) by David Boeri, WBUR

[HUD Awards \\$64.3 Million in
homeless grants to Medford,
Malden](#), Medford Transcript

[At the Front, When Veterans
Come Home](#) by Kevin Coyne,
New York Times

[Budget deficit not a threat to
new state hospital](#) by
Lee Hammel, Worcester
Telegram & Gazette

Roundtable Discussions Continue the Dialogue on Seclusion/Restraint Initiative

When the Seclusion and Restraint Infrastructure Grant
was awarded to DMH October 2004, a technical experts
panel was formed to oversee and give advice on the
progress of restraint reduction. One recommendation
that emerged was the idea of convening round table
discussion opportunities for direct care and treatment
team personnel. This forum was used with great
success by the licensed Children and Adolescent Units
implementing their reduction efforts. The idea was
expanded to include a wider audience and today the
round tables on the Department's Seclusion and
Restraint Reduction Initiative remain a popular and
successful method of information sharing.

Three years ago, the State Infrastructure Grant formally
launched a statewide "Round Table" discussion forum
which provides discussion opportunities to direct care
and clinical staff working with consumers. Some of the
benefits of these forums include increased
communication about specific aspects of the of the
Seclusion and Restraint Initiative; information gathering
and exchange on a practical issue or topic such as the
new Seclusion and Restraint Regulations CMR 27.12; and
the opportunity for staff to see and experience another
facility within the DMH system.

In the first year, the round tables focused on the
National Technical Assistance Center Six Core Strategies
♦ to the DMH Seclusion and Restraint Initiative. These
Six Core Strategies are:

1. Leadership Towards Organizational Change
2. Using Data to Inform Practice



Think before you print

We will be posting **DMH**
Connections on DMH's
intranet site

3. Workforce Development
4. Restraint and Seclusion Prevention Tools
5. Consumer Roles
6. Debriefing Techniques

Round tables are well attended and highlight the shift in culture and the evolution in language used by individuals working on inpatient units at participating facilities. In 2006, the overall average attendance was 16 percent and in 2008 increased to 21 percent. As the shift in culture began to emerge in the facilities, the round table list of topics in 2007 and 2008 focused more on seclusion and restraint prevention tools and person centered care. The round table schedule and monthly flyers encouraged the expansion of participants to include clients, peers from the community and other interested stakeholders.

A November 2007 round table, "Meaningful Peer Involvement," centered on inclusion of clients in meaningful roles, demonstrating the agency's commitment for significant stakeholder investment and input.

In February, 2008, a round table discussion on "Trauma Informed Care" was held at Worcester State Hospital. An audience of 75 participants included patients, consumers, direct care and clinical staff who engaged in an active discussion about the effects of trauma and re-traumatization individually and collectively when a restraint occurred and/or was witnessed, supporting the agency's commitment to a trauma informed care workforce.

Since then additional round table topics have included: Sensory Integration; Cultural Considerations; Person Directed Collaboration; Hope and Recovery; Wellness and the Individualized Crisis Prevention Plan (ICPP); and Successful Alliances

As we move into 2009, an exciting new series of 10 (1 per facility) seclusion and restraint round table discussions will allow facilities to continue to foster and share creative ideas and problem solve together.

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